FROM THE WORLD OF HELLBOY

SHADOW OF THE GOLDEN CRANE™

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"HELLBOY HAD GONE TO CALIFORNIA TO INVESTIGATE A MONSTER SIGHTING, WHILE VICTOR KOESTLER AND I LOOKED INTO A MISSING PERSON CASE IN THE MIDWEST.
"A SWEET OLD GRANDMOTHER HAD BEEN ACTING STRANGELY BEFORE SHE DISAPPEARED.
"THERE WAS REASON TO SUSPECT POSSESSION WAS INVOLVED."
WE'LL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO FIND HER AND GET HER HOME SAFE AND SOUND.
WELL, WE FOUND HER EASY ENOUGH, SUE. NOW WHAT?
SURE LOOKS LIKE POSSESSION TO ME...

TAKE EVERYTHING OF VALUE AND BURN THE REST TO THE GROUND!
AND LET NO ONE STAND IN YOUR WAY!
1876
SMASH
HOLD YOUR FIRE, OFFICERS.
I'LL SEE IF I CAN'T SLOW THEM DOWN.
WHOA!
OOK!

GAS
THE HELL... ?!
VROOOM
THOOP
VROOOM
WHATEVER GRANDMA HAS IN HER IS CHARGING UP THESE BIKERS, TOO. THIS MIGHT BE HARDER THAN I THOUGHT.
ONWARD, TO GLORY!
STAY BACK, OFFICERS, I'M GOING TO TRY SOMETHING.

MA'AM, TRY TO REMAIN CALM. I'VE BEEN TO SEE YOUR FAMILY, AND THEY'RE WORRIED SICK ABOUT YOU.
SO WHY DON'T YOU GET OFF THE BIKE AND WE CAN...
YOU DARE RAISE A HAND TO ME?!
I WILL GIVE YOU CAUSE TO REGRET THIS INSOLENCE!
"I WAS STILL A SHORT WAYS OFF, BUT CLOSE ENOUGH THAT I COULD SENSE THE SPIRIT BLAZING INSIDE HER."
"AND THEN I MADE CONTACT..."

"AND I HEARD VOICES, SO MANY VOICES."
SACRED CHARGE
"OR MAYBE JUST ONE VOICE, ECHOING DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS."
YOU AND ALL OF THOSE CAME BEFORE
"BUT THEN THE VOICES BEGAN TO FADE TO SILENCE."
LISTEN NOW
"AND I FOUND MYSELF LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF A MAN WHO LIVED AND DIED LONG AGO."

"AND I KNEW ALL AT ONCE THAT I WAS SEEING CHINA IN THE 13TH CENTURY, IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE MONGOL INVASION.
"AND THAT I WAS SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF WEN RU, A SCHOLAR AND MEMBER OF THE GOLDEN CRANE SOCIETY."
⟨DID YOU SEE THE LEADER OF THE MONGOL HORDE AS YOU FLED?⟩
⟨NO, WE WERE LUCKY JUST TO GET AWAY WITH OUR LIVES.⟩
"WEN HAD BEEN SENT TO INVESTIGATE A SEEMINGLY SUPERNATURALLY-POWERED LEADER OF THE MONGOL HORDE.
"BUT HE WASN'T HAVING MUCH LUCK."
⟨WE COULD HELP YOU, HONORABLE MASTER.⟩
⟨BUT ONLY IN EXCHANGE FOR A JUG OF WINE.⟩*
*⟨TRANSLATED FROM MANDARIN⟩

⟨BE ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS, DRUNKEN LAYABOUTS, AND LEAVE ME TO MINE.⟩
⟨I KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT THE MONGOL GENERAL YOU SEEK.⟩
⟨TERRIFYING THINGS.⟩
⟨LEAVE ME ALONE, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR ANY FOOLISHNESS.⟩
⟨I THINK YOU'LL HAVE TIME FOR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.⟩
⟨HU QIANG, AT YOUR SERVICE.⟩
⟨NOW COME ON, I THINK I KNOW WHERE WE CAN FIND THEIR CAMP. I'LL EXPLAIN ON THE WAY.⟩

⟨...AND I HAVE BEEN LOOKING INTO STORIES OF THIS MONGOL GENERAL FOR A WHILE NOW.⟩
⟨I'M PRETTY SURE THAT IT'S A CASE OF DEMONIC POSSESSION.⟩
⟨DOUBTFUL. IT SEEMS MUCH MORE LIKELY THAT THIS GENERAL HAS FOUND SOME KIND OF CURSED WEAPON, OR MAGIC ARMOR.⟩
⟨I'VE SEEN A THING OR TWO, AND I'M WILLING TO BET A BARREL OF RICE WINE THAT IT IS A DEMON--⟩
⟨STOP RIGHT THERE!⟩
⟨SURRENDER NOW!⟩
⟨FINALLY.⟩

UTT.
THWACK
HA!
SMASH
⟨REMEMBER, THE GENERAL WANTS PRISONERS ALIVE FOR INTERROGATION.⟩
⟨THE GENERAL, YOU SAY?⟩

‹I SURRENDER.›
‹WHAT? WE CAN TAKE THESE FOOLS.›
‹PLAY ALONG.›
‹BUT DON'T TELL THEM ANY-THING ABOUT THE SECRET PLANS.›
‹SECRET PLANS?›

‹I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.›
‹GET IN THERE.›
‹OOF.›
‹RELAX, WE'RE RIGHT WHERE I WANT US TO BE.›
‹DRUNKEN FOOL...›

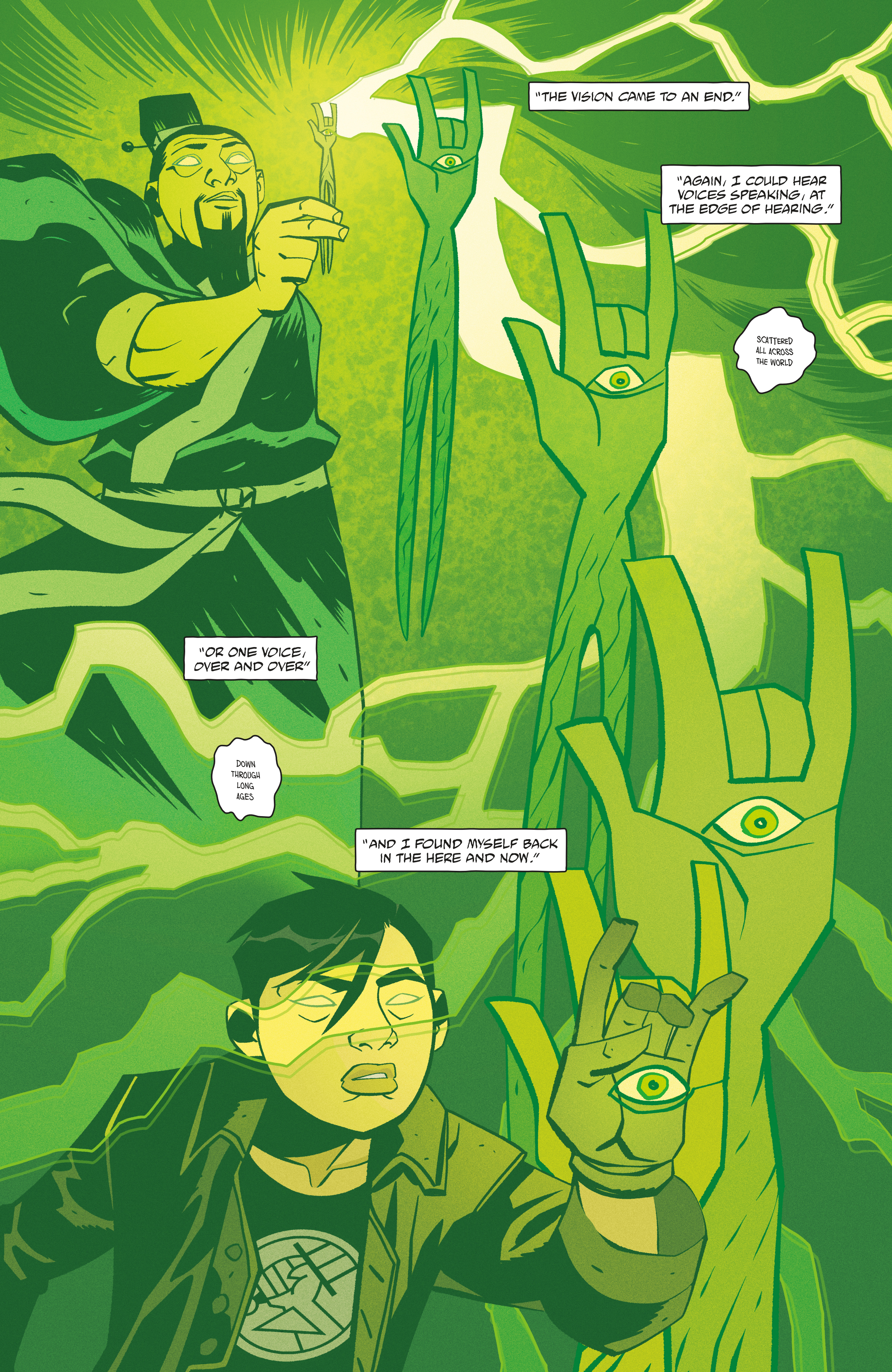
⟨I ONCE DEFEATED A MAN WHO WAS ARMED WITH THE SWORD OF GUAN YU AND ARMOR FORGED BY CHIYOU HIMSELF, SO I KNOW MAGIC ARMS AND ARMOR WHEN I SEE THEM.⟩
⟨AND I TELL YOU, WE ARE DEALING WITH DEMONIC POSSESSION HERE.⟩
⟨BAH, THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY UNKNOWNS.⟩
⟨PERHAPS THE GENERAL HIMSELF IS UNDER SOME CURSE, OR HAS A MAGICIAN IN HIS EMPLOY.⟩
⟨BUT STILL, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO RECOVERED THE GREEN DRAGON BLADE FOR THE SOCIETY? I AM IMPRESSED.⟩
⟨THAT WAS NOTHING. LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME I WENT UP AGAINST THE BASTARD SON OF THE MOON...⟩

⟨COME ON, LAZY DOGS.⟩
⟨WE'RE COMING, ALREADY, STOP DRAGGING.⟩
UNF!
THUD
⟨MY LACKEYS INFORM ME THAT YOU POSSESS SECRET PLANS.⟩
⟨TELL ME ALL THAT YOU KNOW AND PERHAPS YOUR LAST MOMENTS WILL BE FREE OF EXCRUCIATING PAIN.⟩
⟨OH, THAT'S DEMONIC POSSESSION, FOR SURE.⟩
⟨WITHOUT A DOUBT, YOU WERE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.⟩

⟨HU, KEEP THE OTHERS BACK WHILE I DO THE RITUAL.⟩
SNAP
⟨WITH THEIR DEMON MONSTER CLOSE BY I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO BEAT THEM, BUT I CAN HOLD THEM BACK.⟩
⟨YOU CANNOT HOPE TO BEST ME.⟩
⟨I WILL RAIN UNENDING DESTRUCTION UPON THIS WORLD!⟩
⟨I THINK NOT.⟩

AAARRGH!
⟨A DEMON! RUN AWAY!⟩
⟨NOT BAD, WEN.⟩
⟨AH, THE DEMON IS TRAPPED WITHIN A HAIRPIN, IT SEEMS.⟩
⟨BUT THE MAN IT POSSESSED SHOULD NOW BE FREE.⟩
⟨WHERE ...WHERE AM I?⟩

‹SO HE WAS JUST A LOWLY CLERK UNTIL HE FOUND A HAIRPIN THAT SOMEONE HAD TRAPPED A DEMON IN, AND SUDDENLY HE'S AN INVINCIBLE GENERAL WITH AN UNSTOPPABLE ARMY.›
‹I SAW IT FALL, IT MUST BE AROUND HERE SOME-WHERE.›
‹NOW HE'S BACK TO BEING A CONFUSED CLERK, AND HIS ARMY IS SCATTERED AND AFRAID.›
‹THAT CALLS FOR ANOTHER DRINK, I THINK.›
‹AH, THERE IT IS! I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE DEMON HOWLING WITHIN.›
‹NOW I NEED ONLY RETURN IT TO THE GOLDEN CRANE SOCIETY FOR SAFE KEEPING.›
‹YOU'RE WELCOME TO IT, SAVES ME THE TRIP. NOW SIT DOWN AND HAVE A DRINK, WHY DON'T YOU?›


"THE VISION CAME TO AN END."
"AGAIN, I COULD HEAR VOICES SPEAKING, AT THE EDGE OF HEARING."
SCATTERED ALL ACROSS THE WORLD
"OR ONE VOICE, OVER AND OVER"
DOWN THROUGH LONG AGES
"AND I FOUND MYSELF BACK IN THE HERE AND NOW."

VICTOR! LOOK FOR AN OLD HAIRPIN, IT'S GOT TO BE SOMEWHERE ON HER!
OOK
SQUEAL
OOK!
HOW DARE YOU...?
UNHAND ME!

OOK?
LAND SAKES, WHERE AM I?
WHAT THE...?
IS THAT IT?
FOR NOW, AT LEAST.
"THE BIKERS WERE RUN IN FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE AND PROPERTY DAMAGE."
"THE GRANDMA WAS TAKEN HOME TO HER FAMILY."

"AND WHILE THE FAMILY WAS REUNITED, I CAUGHT VICTOR UP ON EVERYTHING I'D SEEN IN MY VISION."
IS IT JUST ME, OR ARE THESE VISIONS OF YOURS JUST GETTING LONGER AND LONGER?
I'M NOT SURE, BUT I THINK IT HAS TO DO WITH THESE SPECIFIC ARTIFACTS WE'RE FINDING.
AND WITH THE GOLDEN CRANE SOCIETY, OBVIOUSLY.
SOMEONE...OR SOMETHING...IS TRYING TO TELL ME SOME-THING.
WHATEVER IT IS, I'M GUESSING IT PROBABLY MEANS MORE TROUBLE FOR US?
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED.
TO BE CONTINUED...